

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Hyde Park Community Facility
201 S. Greenwood
October 5, 2013
8:30 a.m.**

Present: Bryan Frye, Ron Allen, Cindy Claycomb, Steve Hieger, Hoyt Hillman, Tom Roth

Absent: None

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation, Christina Butler, Clerk, Karen Holmes, Recreation Superintendent, David McGuire, Forestry and Maintenance Superintendent, Troy Hendricks, Interim Golf Division Manager.

Meeting was called to order approximately 8:38am.

PUBLIC AGENDA

None.

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 1: Approval of Minutes

Claycomb noted a correction needed to be made on page 4 or 5 of the minutes, when discussing the River Vista project it should state it would be located "on the west bank" rather than "between the Keeper and the Drury".

Motion by Claycomb, second by Roth, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO approve with changes, sign and file minutes of the September 16, 2013, Board of Park Commissioners Regular Meeting (6-0).

Item 2: Watson Steering Committee (Karen Holmes)

Holmes distributed information regarding Watson Park. She noted that as part of the budget process it was recommended to look at Watson Park. The park has great amenities, but they needed to create a vision for the park for the next 10 years. She stated that the process would be similar to the Aquatics Master Plan process with meetings and engagement with stake holders. There would also be a board involved in the selection of committee members. The committee members would apply to be on the committee through survey monkey. This committee would look at similar types of parks to see what others are doing. Currently, Watson Park is subsidized \$170,000 annually and has been asked to commit to 100% cost recovery.

Frye asked if 100% cost recovery is the goal for 2014.

Holmes responded that was the goal for 2015 and added they would like to go to City Council in March 2014 with the plan for Watson Park.

Frye commented that it was a quick turnaround.

Kupper stated they needed a game plan for the budget process and the 2015 budget would be built around it.

Holmes stated that staff is already working on the project. Those working on the project include Larry Hoetmer (Landscape Architect), Warren McCoskey (Park Maintenance Supervisor), and Brian Hill (Watson Park Manager).

Hillman asked if they were planning access points into the Arkansas River.

Holmes responded that it could be part of the plan.

Hillman noted that the shorelines are steep at Watson, but the park has parking which makes it attractive to boaters.

Kupper stated that Watson Park is completely fenced in and parking is a fairly long distance which is also the case at Herman Hill Park. He added that both parks are otherwise prime locations.

Frye stated that the selection committee needs a steering committee member and asked if Hillman would be interested in being on the steering committee.

Hillman responded yes.

Motion by Frye, second by Claycomb, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to appoint Hillman to be on the Watson Park Steering Committee.

Claycomb suggested the Board take up the subject again at the November meeting once they have the applications for steering committee members.

Frye asked what the deadline would be for applications to be submitted for the committee.

Holmes noted that it would be at end of October.

Claycomb suggested having the applications sent electronically to the Board so they could discuss and vote on it in November.

Frye stated they could plan on doing that at the November meeting.

Item 3: Continuation of Prior Business

None.

Item 4: Updates from the Director and President

Kupper stated they were initiating CIP money for the MacDonald Golf Course fence along with the 13th Street project. The City needed real estate on 13th Street for widening of the corridor and they came to the Park Board who holds the deed and asked for an easement. MacDonald Golf Course received a better fence along 13th Street and a monument at Roosevelt and 13th Street. The bike path was also improved. The Board received \$250,000 improvements for the real estate.

Frye noted that the entire perimeter will get fencing. He asked how tall the fence would be.

Kupper responded he believed it would be 8 feet high.

Allen asked where the bike path was located.

Kupper responded that it was on the railroad corridor. He noted that all golf courses were deeded to the Park Board with the exception of Auburn Hills. And most parks were deeded to the Park Board as well.

Hieger asked about Auburn Hills.

Kupper responded that it was deeded after 1972.

Claycomb asked about the completion date for the 13th Street project.

Kupper responded that it was due to be completed by Spring 2014 and they were putting in fencing now. He stated they had to move the culvert at Crestview and move the fence in 5 feet, but there would still be a sidewalk.

Kupper stated that he would go before City Council on November 12 for approval for the Southlakes project under new business.

Kupper noted they would be conducting interviews for the Golf Division Manager position on October 28 and 29. He noted there would be eight candidates interviewed and there would be an invitation to a "meet and greet" reception on Monday, October 28, at Auburn Hills to meet the candidates along with the Golf Steering Committee.

Frye asked if there were any golf updates.

Hendricks stated rounds were down 4% for September and down 13% for the year, however the numbers were better than regional numbers. He noted that even though rounds were slightly down for September, revenue was up. He had also provided the Golf Committee with a chart for weather comparisons. In 2012, the average low in March was 56 degrees and the high was 69 degrees. This year the average low was 32 degrees and the high was 55 degrees. So they lost morning rounds in March. January and February 2013 they had snow.

Frye asked about the construction projects.

Hendricks stated that the well was down at Auburn Hills in August due to the heat. It was only producing 30% of what it should have been. He had a company come in and look at the well and they discovered a hole in the casing causing the well to lose water. They pulled the casing and had to repair a 12" hole costing \$17,000.

Kupper added that Clapp's club house had just received new siding and a new roof.

Hendricks added that windows need to be replaced due to rot, but this would have to be approved by City Council for CIP money.

Kupper noted that Tex Consolver's construction is completed except for the parking lot.

Hendricks added they would go to bid in Spring 2014 for the parking lot there.

Frye asked if that was in the CIP for 2014.

Kupper responded that most of it was and they also had some money for the bridge.

Hieger asked if they would do new striping for ADA requirements.

Kupper responded yes and would also have some added expenses for new ramps.

Hendricks added that there were ADA improvements needed at Sim Golf Course and the ramps at Auburn Hills would have to be replaced as well.

Kupper stated they had to move the cart path on the front nine holes due to unknowingly being on private property at Auburn Hills. It had been that way for 13 years, so there were unforeseen costs involved. They have \$270,000 left to work on parking lots.

Frye stated that the next Golf Committee meeting was scheduled for October 9 and they hoped for a good October.

Hendricks discussed the customer appreciation events at the golf courses and noted that over 250 rounds of golf had been played.

Frye asked if there was a Recreation update.

Holmes stated that the Aquatics Master Plan would be presented to City Council at a workshop on October 22. She also noted that work would soon begin on the Watson Park Master Plan.

Kupper asked David McGuire to give an update on contract maintenance.

McGuire stated that they had started the year with water conservation being the hot topic. The department was challenged to come up with ideas to conserve water. And then it started raining. The grass grew like crazy and the department had to shift its thinking to how to keep the grass looking good. The department is currently taking hundreds of calls on grass needing to be mowed and trees needing to be pruned. He stated it was a challenging summer. He noted they are looking at playgrounds that

have bad surfacing on them such as Aley Park. He noted they have playground money. They are also looking at Elm Street Park at Grove and Central on the northeast corner.

Allen stated it was an interesting place to put a park because it is so busy at Central.

Kupper stated they will have fencing on Grove and Central and that the Elm Street neighborhood has worked with the department for six years to make this happen.

McGuire stated that they contract out 4,600 acres for mowing. They kept some in-house mowing, but all outlying areas and ditches are contracted out.

Kupper added that several positions were eliminated in 2009 and they began contracting.

McGuire stated that they have seven contractors.

Kupper added that they try not to give more than 1,500 acres to any single contractor.

McGuire stated that native grass areas will help with erosion and will reduce mowing by 4,800 acres. The east bank of the Arkansas River is dead in order to kill the Bermuda grass and re-plant native grass in the Spring. They are working hard on controlling weeds on Kellogg and will let the buffalo grass come up naturally to create "no mow" or "low mow" zones. They will have grants that will supplement money for the Chisholm Creek Park improvements. They will get the barns cleaned up in the Chisholm Creek Park area. He noted that the wind from the previous night had perpetuated the tree issue adding that contractors have to clean up smaller branches prior to mowing which has an effect on them keeping up with their contracts.

Frye asked if the contract renewals were staggered.

Kupper stated they had just renewed contracts last year and they were in the first year of the three year contract. The contractors were asked if they wanted to renew. Most of the 2,000 acres still maintained by City employees are athletic fields.

McGuire stated staff was telling citizens that it could take 18-24 months for crews to prune their tree. When a customer calls, a work order is created and an inspector is sent out to determine the priority level of the tree: Priority 1 is a dangerous tree and needs to be addressed immediately and Priority 2 or 3 will most likely be several months out. Staff also reassures customers that they are still on the list and they have not been forgotten.

Kupper added that they are down 50% in staff due to vacancies.

McGuire stated his staff removed 7,000 trees in the past year. They recently submitted a request to fill vacant positions within the division and reminded the decision makers that trees are becoming dangerous and there are more claims due to damage from trees.

Kupper stated more trees will probably be lost due to the drought.

Claycomb asked if filling the vacancies was being thwarted and if they will have to outsource the Forestry jobs as well.

Kupper responded that his staff is so efficient it would not be best to outsource.

McGuire stated that the division also takes all of the emergency calls for the City.

Kupper estimated approximately 10,000 dead trees currently with the potential to lose another 20,000 trees next year.

Frye asked if there was a replacement program in place.

Kupper responded that all replacement funds have been eliminated over the years due to budget constraints.

McGuire added that replacement tree funds may be back in the budget for 2015.

Kupper stated that previously Martin Pringle had paid for trees in Old Town and Westar had contributed \$50,000. His department was seeking additional funding sources and noted it was illogical to plant trees during the drought the last several years.

Hieger added that Cheney State Park had lost 30% of its trees as well.

McGuire stated they still have stumps to remove and the stump removal crew is the same crew that plants trees.

Hillman asked how big trees have to be before they have to be replaced.

Kupper responded 1 ½" to 2" in diameter.

Hillman stated he may be able to find some funding.

Frye thanked the Board members who attended the dock dedication on the Arkansas River adding that it was a nice gift for boaters in the community.

Frye stated that the bull dedication was very nice and the bull itself was striking. He complemented City staff on their restoration efforts and thanked partners who helped with setting it up.

Frye reminded the Board that the Party in the Park would be later that evening at the Hyatt lawn.

Kupper stated it was an event to get to know the non-profit organization, Wichita Parks Foundation. He noted the foundation will receive some profit off of the food and wine trucks. The Watson train engine will be on display and the inflatable from Watson will be there for children. He noted that the floating stage will also be on display in another area and they will try to direct people to that area to view this new asset.

Frye stated there will be an open house for the Golf Division Manager candidates on October 28 at Auburn Hills and all the Board members were invited to attend.

Frye suggested the Board visit Botanica because it is beautiful this time of year. He noted that the new event center is under construction and it has been fantastic with the Children's Garden.

Kupper stated there was also "Bootanica" for the kids.

Claycomb stated there would be a fundraiser for Botanica at the Orpheum soon.

Hillman stated that Lights on the River would be on December 7 from 4-6:30pm.

Item 5: Adjourn for Annual Retreat

There being no further business for the Regular Meeting, the meeting was adjourned at approx 9:40am for the Annual Retreat.

Bryan Frye, President

Christina Butler, Clerk